

# HOW SUPREMELY RIGHTEOUS THE FINAL JUDGMENT WILL BE

## A Homily for Meatfare Sunday

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The holy Church dedicates this present Sunday to the remembrance of God's Last Judgment. Taking care for our salvation, it wants to awaken in us repentance for our sins and strengthen our weak zeal for salvific deeds. Let us heed its voice. Let us hear the words of God about the great judgment, about the Dread Judgment. Let us move our hearts to contrition. Oh, how great is this day—the day of sin and God's vengeance!

May we not deceive ourselves with dreams; let us not nourish sin in our souls with willful thoughts that this threatening future will never come. Willfulness says to its own destruction: "Where is the promise of His coming?" The word of man is not true, but the word of God is true: The day of the terrible appearance of Christ will come, the day of the revelation of God's judgment—a great day, the final day, after which there will be no more days (Rom. 2:5, Mt. 13:40, 49). Let us not make haste to sin, but rather to repent. Life is a field where grow both wheat and tares. The tares aren't pulled out due to cautious forbearance. The time of harvest will come, then the tares won't be spared (Mt. 13:39–40).

The Lord doesn't delay in fulfilling His promise, He only endures and waits, whether people will come to their senses, whether they will think better of their ways, whether they will mourn their sins with bitter tears of repentance. There will be a trial. God has spoken about it. Heaven and earth will pass, but the word of God won't pass away. The prophets of God proclaimed the universal Judgment (Is. 34:1–6, 66:16–21, Joel 3:7–17, Dan. 7:9–10, Mal. 3:14–18). The Psalms sing about the universal Judgment: *He will judge the world in righteousness* (Ps. 9:9, cf. Ps. 93:23). The Apostles preached: *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ* (2 Cor. 5:10). The Son of God Himself, so full of love and mercy for us, said many times: *For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works* (Mt. 16:27).

That day will be terrible for everyone, especially for those who have rejected Christ or haven't fulfilled their faithfulness to Him. Who will be the judge at this trial? Our Lord Jesus Christ—He Who poured out His Blood for us, Who endured so much suffering for our sins that we might no longer live for sin—He Whom we pledged to serve from the font to the grave. Oh,

how terrible it will be for us to stand before Him so ungrateful to Him! However His appearance may be, it will by itself sternly expose the insensitivity of Christians. *Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn* (Mt. 24:30). *They shall look upon Him Whom they pierced* (Jn. 19:37, Zech. 12:10).

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for judgment won't be the same as His coming to earth for our salvation. It will be majestic and formidable, such that the universe, stricken with terror, shall take on a new form. The Son of God will appear surrounded by a host of angels, in the full majesty of the glory of the Son of God. *They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory* (Mt. 24:30), *in the glory of His Father with His angels* (Mt. 16:27). *And I saw*, says the seer of mysteries, *a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them* (Rev. 20:11).

The kings of the earth and the nobles, equal with the lowest slaves, shall turn to the mountains and rocks in terror and wailing, and shall cry out: *Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?* (Rev. 6:16–17). My friends! Can thought encompass the glory of God, appearing in His terrible truth? Can a narrow heart hold all the terror with which the whole universe shall tremble at the manifestation of this glory of the boundless One? Repent, wash yourself with tears, my poor soul; turn to the Lord your God, that the righteousness of broken faith may sustain you, poor one, in the day of wrath and the revelation of God's judgment.

What a tribunal! What an all-encompassing judgment! From earth to hell is its domain; from men to fallen spirits, all will appear to hear the final utterance of eternal, unchanging eternity (Jude 1:6, 1 Cor. 6:3). The quick and the dead, the Gentile and the Jew, the believer and the unbeliever—men of all times and nations will stand to give an answer for their deeds (Mt. 25:32, Rom. 2:6–12, Acts 10:42, 17:31). How many there are among us here who would agree that it's better to die than to endure being upbraided for their sins before their fellow men! What horror will strike this hypocritical shame, or more precisely, this impious self-love when dark deeds will be revealed before the entire universe? Humble yourself, my poor soul, sincerely reveal your sins to the mediator between you and God, so as not to be exposed to shame before the whole world.

Our heart shudders and our insides tremble when we imagine that all our secret and overt deeds will be revealed there. But they will be; they undoubtedly will be. The subject of the trial will be all our deeds, good and bad, *that every one may receive the things done in his body ... whether it be good or bad* (2 Cor. 5:10), and it will be *render[ed] to every man according to his deeds* (Rom. 2:6). Wrath, deception, hatred, anger, theft, drunkenness,

carnal impurities, pride, vanity—everything will be put to shame. How many idle words pour out of our mouths! They're even taken as cute little jokes. That's not how they'll look there. There, we'll have to give an answer for every idle word (Mt. 12:36). All secret thoughts, all secret intentions, all movements of the [heart](#), all desires carefully kept from the eyes of others, all will be revealed, no matter how black, no matter how dirty; all will be exposed and judged. *The Lord [will] come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts* (1 Cor. 4:5).

How can we not weep, how can we not mourn about such a terrible, threatening future? How much hypocrisy is hidden in our deeds here! How much pretense, how much guile in our plans! Vile deeds are covered with the most beautiful appearance and purchase men's approval at the price of spiritual dishonesty. Oh! There this mask of dishonesty will be removed from our deeds and intentions and their vileness will be revealed in their exact hideous form. There it will be revealed that these fashions of the times, these exquisite outfits are not only vanity, but also the filthy traces of the filthy lusts of the heart.

Foolish father! Frivolous mother! Son of a forgetful age! Negligent companion! How many temptations you sow to the ruin of hearts! How many lessons of wickedness you give to immature and careless souls. Oh! Stop. Vain woman! Do you understand, do you see that your attire, your luxurious clothing, your invented beauty are the net of the man-slaying devil, if not by your intention, then by your carelessness. How will you answer there for the destruction of the souls of those whom you tempted, whether by your intention or your carelessness? *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea* (Mt. 18:6). The time will come when the angels of God will gather together *all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire* (Mt. 13:41–42).

Lament, my soul, while there is still time for fruitful contrition; lament all the deeds you have received from the grace of God and squandered! You will give a terrible account for the talents entrusted to you. Oh! Woe to me a sinner who has received so much both from the providential hand of God and from the grace of Christ my Jesus. What will I offer, what will I return to You, my generous Lord? My laziness and negligence keep me on the comfortable bed of sin, in idleness and vanity. Woe to me, who has defiled the pure garment of my Baptism! How many times, My Lord, You did rouse me to [repentance](#) by both bodily sicknesses and the sorrowful encounters of life! As soon as I awoke from my sleep, I fell asleep again, my Savior! Before Your dread Judgment, turn my heart to You, my God; don't reject me who has rejected You; don't forsake me who has forsaken You, my God and Savior!

Don't you think, my friends, that it will be difficult for us when all the deeds and all the peoples of the earth will be tested? The seer of mysteries tells us: *I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works* (Rev. 20:12). What are these opened books that are being used to judge the dead? What is this other book called the book of life? These indicate the omniscience of God, Who has no need of books, to Whom all of our deeds are already known. Always righteous and omniscient, He strictly distinguishes the deeds of the righteous from the deeds of sinners. Always good, He doesn't ignore a single feat of obedience to His will, not a single tear of repentance is hidden from Him, He knows every cup of cold water given in His name; He's already appointed the reward of life for those who love Him. But alas! How few are the righteous and how many are the unrighteous is recorded in His righteous omniscience. The former occupy one part, one book; the latter occupy many parts, many books.

According to this omniscience, righteous and good, He will pronounce the final decision about the eternal fate of men and tribes. And the conscience of every man will show his deeds to every man there. If here it's dark, if much is forgotten here, much is overlooked, overshadowed by the passions and vanities, there it will be illumined. The light of God's truth will dispel the conscience's darkness. *The Lord [will] come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts* (1 Cor. 4:5). Illuminated by this light, the conscience will show us all the sequences of the past, all the sequences of thoughts, movements, desires, and deeds. And don't forget that when the great harvest comes in the field of the works of the world, the harvesters will be angels who will separate the tares from the wheat, the wicked from the pious.

Let us arise, we who sleep in sin, let us rise from the sleep of self-indulgence; and may Christ enlighten us before that terrible illumination of truth (Eph. 5:14).

How strict, how supremely righteous the Last Judgment will be! If the Lord knows all, if He's as righteous as He is powerful, then how terrible His judgment will be! *In flaming fire [He will take] vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 Thess. 1:8). He won't regard persons—the Judge will be holy and righteous (Rom. 2:11). No one or anything will protect us in this judgment—neither friends, nor relatives, nor those whom we flattered hoping in their power; they will all answer for themselves (Eph. 6:9). The ruler of the nations will stand there, like his lowest subject, in trembling anticipation of the verdict. There, every man will count for as much as his virtues are worth. We're accustomed to comforting our carelessness with hope in the goodness of God. There we will meet only truth—it will distinguish the holy hope from the careless and

blasphemous hope in us. It will reveal to us both the measure of our strengths and the measure of our weaknesses; it will take into account the measure of our capabilities and our poverty. *Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile* (Rom. 2:9)—first to the Christian, then to the ignorant of Christ. Much will be demanded from me, the unfortunate one, who has been given more than others (Luke 12:47–48).

My friends! *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life... Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man* (Lk. 21:34, 36). It's not given to us to know when that terrible day will come, but it's been revealed that it will certainly come, and we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Let us stock up on the oil of good deeds that our lamps might not be extinguished when there is nowhere to get more oil (Mt. 25:7).

I fall down before you, my Lord Jesus Christ, the living Son of God! Reward us not according to our deeds, and may our deeds not anger You. Have mercy upon us according to Your mercy; grant us to see You in peace and joy, even among Your very last servants, to Your glory and the glory of the consubstantial Father and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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